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# In trade, U.S. sends Ghana spy home

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WASHINGTON — A cousin of Ghana's military leader has secretly pleaded no contest to spying on the United States and was swapped back to his homeland yesterday in exchange for close to 10 Ghanaians "of interest to the United States," a Justice Department spokesman said.

Spokesman John Russell said Michael A. Soussoudis, 39, who has been in U.S. custody since his arrest at a suburban motel July 10, was remanded to the custody of Ghana's ambassador to the United States, Eric Otoo, on the condition that he leave this country soon.

Soussoudis is a cousin of Lt. Jerry Rawlings, the military leader of Ghana, and had publicly denied charges

that he was a spy.

But Russell said Soussoudis pleaded no contest at a closed hearing last week in U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., to two counts under the espionage act, each of which carried a maximum 10-year penalty.

Yesterday, Soussoudis was sentenced to 20 years in prison, but the sentence was reduced by U.S. District Judge Richard L. Williams to time served and he was turned over to the Ghanaian ambassador.

In return, nearly 10 Ghanaians and their families were flown to another African nation, which cooperated with the Justice Department in arranging the swap. The nation was not identified.

Russell would say only that the Ghanaians were "of interest to the

United States," but they were thought to have spied for the CIA.

Also yesterday, Soussoudis' co-defendant, Sharon M. Scranage, 29, a former clerk at the CIA station in Accra, Ghana, was sentenced by Williams to five years in prison for her role in the spy affair.

She pleaded guilty to sharing CIA secrets, including the identities of informants, with Soussoudis, who officials said had become her lover.

Government sources had said that Scranage had been told by the CIA while she was still in Ghana to drop her liaison with Soussoudis, but that he had admitted to CIA security officers upon her reassignment here that the relationship had continued.

She was said to have cooperated in luring Soussoudis to what he thought would be a romantic engagement with her, but was instead a setup for his arrest.

The names of those allowed to leave Ghana were not immediately

available, but four Ghanaians have been sentenced in the last two weeks for spying for the CIA.

Stephen Balfour Ofosu-Addo, a former chief superintendent of police, was convicted in Ghana of giving Ghanaian secrets to the CIA and arranging for taps on the telephones of diplomatic missions and high-level Ghanaian officials. He has been sentenced to life in prison.

Robert Yaw Appiah, a technician with the Ghanaian Post & Telecommunications Corp., was sentenced to 22 years for aiding the CIA.

Theodore Attiedu, an inspector in the Ghanaian intelligence service, was given 25 years of hard labor, and Felix Peasah, a former employee of the now-defunct Ghana Special Branch, was given life in prison.

The swap was negotiated by the Justice Department's internal security section, which was responsible for the prosecutions of Scranage and Soussoudis.